Menstruation usually begins between the thirteenth and fifteenth years. From then on it is called *//kʰā/s-ei(e)si, i.e., "moon sickness," from the regularity of its recurrence. It supposedly lasts three days on the average and is scanty. [Picture, Plate XII. Topnaar Hottentot Girl.] At this time they often [297] paint their faces with a dark greasy salve. (See Care of the Body, p. 210).

Those who are menstruating are not allowed in the kraal, let alone to do the milking. It is difficult to get reliable information about the end of menstruation. I knew of two women who had children when 47 years of age and of another aged 55 who still had periods. In general the appearance of the climacteric does not seem to deviate from the norm for our race.

In marriage, !gē-nub, is the goal which the girl seeks. I was astonished how carefully regulated customs have still been maintained in secrecy where the ethical customs have not degenerated or have not been clothed in Christian guise. Chance observations and occasional remarks of my companions gave me the clues which I had only to pursue with patience to find out the remnants of original folkways that are still well preserved under the varnish of semi-civilization.

A man who wishes to find out if a girl reciprocates his feeling of love hands the girl of his choice a little stick. If they are both in agreement, they break the little stick, each holding on to one end, and throw the broken stick towards each other's breast. The man is now the *!naob of the girl, the girl the *!nau of the man. They then enter into a love relationship as the word !nau - to be ashamed) indicates and as the old custom actually demands, which places on them the following duties of modesty. The betrothed may not speak to each other nor hand each other things. Anything they wish to say or give to each other must be done through an intermediary, a man or a woman. Violations are expiated by atonement presents -- they are actually love tokens and so the whole thing is a game of hide and seek that has become a fixed custom.

This can continue for months, a year, or longer before the relationship becomes closer. This can then happen in two ways, openly by asking the parents or secretly by a symbolic action which indicates the girl's agreement to complete surrender. The lover takes off a skin shoe when the two of them are alone and throws it to the girl. If she leaves the shoe untouched, the offer of a permanent union is rejected. If she wishes to accept the proposal, she returns the shoe.

Magic is also involved in intrigues of love. An effective means of separating lovers, according to the opinion of informed [298] magicians,